

Focus. . . 1998 Vital Statistics

The average life expectancy for Missourians hit a record high last year, according to data released by the Missouri Department of Health. The average life expectancy in 1998 was 75.7, compared with 75.6 years in 1997 and 75.2 in 1988.

However, the increased life expectancy has been concentrated primarily among men. In 1998 the male life expectancy increased 0.3 years to 72.9 years. The rate for women did not change, remaining at 78.6. This difference of 5.7 years between the sexes is the smallest life expectancy differential since the early 1950s.

Much of this change by gender can be attributed to changes in smoking-related deaths. From 1988 to 1998, deaths from lung cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease and heart disease increased by 9 percent for women while they decreased by 2 percent for men. Changes in smoking patterns by gender 20 to 30 years ago affected these changes.

"Unfortunately, we are seeing the effects today of women taking up smoking in large numbers in the 1960s and 1970s," said Dr. Maureen Dempsey, director of the Missouri Department of Health.

Overall, a record 54,849 Missourians died in 1998 compared with 54,203 in 1997. This increased mortality primarily was due to an aging of the population.

Heart disease, the number one killer in the state and nation, decreased in 1998. A total of 17,841 Missourians died from heart disease in 1998, about two percent less than the 18,228 heart disease deaths in 1997. This is the lowest since 1992 and the death rate of 328.0 per 100,000 population is the lowest heart disease death rate in 50 years.

Dempsey said heart disease mortality has been reduced as a result of awareness, physician counseling, and community-based programs that reduce smoking, physical inactivity, poor nutrition and obesity. Additionally, better medical treatment and emergency care for heart attack victims are factors.

The next five leading causes of death: cancer, stroke, chronic lung disease, pneumonia and influenza, and accidents (unintentional injuries) all increased in 1998. Pneumonia and influenza deaths showed the largest percentage increase, 12.2 percent. Pneumonia and influenza may have been a contributor to other causes of death, as flu epidemics frequently lead to increases in chronic diseases and other causes of death.

A subcategory of accidents, non-motor vehicle unintentional injuries, also increased sharply in 1998, from 1,079 to 1,222 deaths or a 13.3 percent increase. The increase primarily reflected increases in falls among the elderly.

According to Dempsey, deaths from falls among people 75 years and older increased from 286 in 1997 to 378 in 1998, or 32 percent. She said most of these falls occur in homes.

"As Missouri's population continues to age, falls will increasingly become a concern," Dempsey said. She said recommendations for prevention include safety devices such as grab bars and nonskid mats in tubs and showers, handrails alongside stairs and good lighting in all rooms.

Dempsey said osteoporosis may also play a role, and dietary supplements of vitamin D, and calcium may help, along with exercise.

In other statistics released, AIDS deaths continued to decrease, but at a much slower pace in 1998. Deaths due to AIDS decreased by 12 percent from 163 in 1997 to 145 in 1998. This follows decreases by one-third and one-half for the two previous years. With no new treatments in the past year this slower decrease was expected.

Infant mortality has stabilized in recent years as the 1998 infant death rate of 7.6 per 1,000 live births is the same as the rates in 1996 and 1997. Nationally, the infant death rate is also stabilizing, but at a slightly lower level of 7.0 per 1,000 live births in 1997 and 1998. However, the disparity between African-American and white infant mortality remains high. In 1998 the African-American infant death rate of 16.7 per 1,000 live births was more than 2.7 times the white rate of 6.1. The white rate has decreased by almost one third in the past decade while the African-American rate is almost the same as it was ten years ago.

"I am very concerned about the high infant mortality rate among African-Americans in the state," Dempsey said. "It is clear that we are going to have to find new approaches that will focus on helping African-Americans have healthy babies and providing support in the babies' early years," she added.

Other maternal and child health rates show a continuation of trends over the past few years. The low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds) increased from 7.7 percent in 1997 to 7.8 percent in 1998, the highest level in 30 years. The rate of inadequate prenatal care continued to decrease, reaching a record low 11.0 percent compared with 11.4 percent in 1997 and 17.4 percent in 1988.

Total live births increased by about two percent in 1998 to 75,242 from 73,940 in 1997. This is the highest Missouri birth count since 1992. Both white and African-American births increased in 1998.

Other maternal and child health indicators showed the following:

- Out-of-wedlock births increased by 4.7 percent from 24,491 to 25,650, representing 34.1 percent of births.
- Births occurring less than 18 months since previous births decreased from 10.8 to 10.5 percent of second and higher order births.
- Smoking during pregnancy decreased from 26.1 percent in 1988 to 19.5 percent in 1997 to 19.0 percent in 1998.
- The percentage of births to mothers on Medicaid, WIC or Food Stamps all decreased.

Other vital statistics data show a continued decrease in marriages as well as a decrease in dissolutions of marriage. The 1998 marriage count of 43,685 marriages is the lowest in 32 years. Divorces have been fairly stable in recent years.

Table 1**Vital Statistics for Missouri: 1988, 1997 and 1998**

	<i>Numbers</i>			<i>Rates per 1,000 Population</i>		
	<i>1988</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
Births	76,101	73,940	75,242	15.0	13.7	13.8
Deaths	50,619	54,203	54,849	10.0	10.0	10.1
Natural Increases	25,482	19,741	20,393	5.0	3.7	3.7
Marriages	50,330	43,812	43,685	9.9	8.1	8.0
Divorces	24,948	25,632	25,305	4.9	4.7	4.7
Infant Deaths	770	562	573	10.1*	7.6*	7.6*
Abortions	18,379	13,321	12,751	241.5*	180.2*	169.5*
Population	5,082	5,408	5,439			

(1,000s)

*Per 1,000 live births

Table 2**Leading Causes of Deaths with Rates: Missouri 1988, 1997 and 1998**

Leading Causes of Death	<i>Numbers</i>			<i>Rates per 100,000 Pop.</i>		
	<i>1988</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
Heart	18,433	18,228	17,841	351.0	337.1	328.0
Cancer	10,913	12,120	12,377	214.7	224.1	227.6
Lung Cancer	3,183	3,767	3,876	62.6	69.7	71.3
Stroke	3,607	3,844	3,962	71.0	71.1	72.8
Chronic Pulmonary Disease	2,096	2,632	2,735	41.2	48.7	50.3
Pneumonia & Influenza	1,935	2,173	2,438	38.1	40.2	44.8
Accidents	2,127	2,276	2,381	41.9	42.1	43.8
Motor Vehicle	1,073	1,197	1,159	21.1	22.1	21.3
Other	1,054	1,079	1,222	20.7	20.0	22.5
Diabetes	817	1,387	1,390	16.1	25.6	25.6
Nephritis & Nephrosis	610	707	706	12.0	13.1	13.0
Suicide	678	710	691	13.3	13.1	12.7
Alzheimer's Disease	295	494	529	5.8	9.1	9.7
Septicemia	453	489	511	8.9	9.0	9.4
Homicide	429	443	441	8.4	8.2	8.1

AIDS	182	163	145	3.6	3.0	2.7
Maternal Deaths	5	7	10	6.6**	9.4**	13.3**

**Per 100,000 live births

Table 3

Trends in Maternal and Child Health Statistics: Missouri 1988, 1997, and 1998

	<i>Numbers</i>			<i>Rates</i>		
	<i>1988</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
	<i>Rates per 1,000 Live Births</i>					
Infant Deaths	770	562	573	10.1	7.6	7.6
White	562	373	378	8.9	6.1	6.1
Black	216	179	190	16.8	16.3	16.7
<i>Percent of Live Births</i>						
Low Birth Weight	5,214	5,721	5,896	6.9	7.7	7.8
White	3,564	4,090	4,173	5.7	6.7	6.7
Black	1,587	1,493	1,600	13.1	13.6	14.1
Inadequate Prenatal Care	12,950	8,155	8,111	17.4	11.4	11.0
White	8,649	5,408	5,281	14.0	9.1	8.6
Black	4,135	2,476	2,580	35.5	24.4	23.7
Birth Spacing <18 mos.	5,663	4,500	4,476	12.8	10.8	10.5
Out-of-Wedlock Births	19,057	24,491	25,650	25.0	33.1	34.1
Teen (10-19) Births	10,399	10,260	10,407	13.7	13.9	13.8
Early Teen (10-17) Births	3,848	3,724	3,616	5.1	5.0	4.8
Smoking During Pregnancy	19,855	14,410	14,309	26.1	19.5	19.0
Medicaid Births	19,588*	28,838	28,847	26.4*	40.4	39.7
WIC Births	24,430*	29,711	29,714	32.5*	41.6	40.9
Food Stamp Births	13,473*	13,626	12,005	17.9*	19.1	16.5
Abortions	18,379	13,321	12,751			
Live Births	76,101	73,940	75,242			

*1989 used because 1988 was not available.

Table 4

Trends in Life Expectancies (Years) by Gender: Missouri 1950-1998

<i>Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Difference</i>
1950	65.6	71.3	5.7
1960	66.9	73.6	6.7
1970	66.8	74.7	7.9
1975	68.4	76.4	8.0
1980	69.9	77.6	7.7
1985	71.2	78.3	7.1
1990	71.7	78.9	7.2
1991	71.5	78.9	7.4
1992	71.8	79.1	7.3
1993	71.6	78.7	7.1
1994	71.7	78.6	6.9
1995	71.8	78.6	6.8
1996	72.4	78.5	6.1
1997	72.6	78.6	6.0
1998	72.9	78.6	5.7

Provisional Vital Statistics for March 1999

Live births increased in March as 6,785 Missouri babies were born compared to 6,670 one year earlier. Cumulative births show a decrease for the first quarter of 1999 and an increase for the 12 months ending with March.

Deaths increased in March, but decreased for the cumulative 3- and 12-month periods ending with March. For the first quarter, deaths decreased from 15,683 to 15,420, or 1.7 percent.

The **Natural increase** for Missouri in March was 1,136 (6,785 births minus 5,649 deaths). The natural increase rate in March was 2.4 per 1,000 population, the same as the previous March.

Marriages increased in March, but were down for the 3- and 12-month periods ending with March.

Dissolutions of marriage also increased in March, but decreased for the 3- and 12-month periods ending with March.

Infant deaths decreased in March as 42 Missouri infants died compared with 59 in March 1998. Infant deaths also decreased for the first quarter and 12 months ending with March.

PROVISIONAL RESIDENT VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE STATE OF MISSOURI

<i>Item</i>	March				Jan.-March cumulative				12 months ending with March				
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate*</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate*</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate*</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate*</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate*</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate*</i>	
	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>
Live Births	6,620	6,785	13.5	14.6	18,590	18,198	13.9	13.5	73,563	75,260	13.7	13.6	13.8
Deaths	5,438	5,649	11.1	12.1	15,683	15,420	11.7	11.4	55,039	53,116	10.1	10.2	9.8
Natural increase	1,182	1,136	2.4	2.4	2,907	2,778	2.2	2.1	18,524	22,144	3.6	3.4	4.1
Marriages	2,458	2,942	5.0	6.3	7,850	7,670	5.9	5.7	44,222	43,615	8.3	8.2	8.0
Dissolutions	2,119	2,187	4.3	4.7	6,303	6,220	4.7	4.6	26,126	25,716	4.7	4.8	4.7

Infant deaths	59	42	8.9	6.2	166	134	8.9	7.4	569	565	8.0	7.7	7.5
Population base (in thousands)	...	...	5,439	5,470	...	...	5,439	5,470	...	...	5,375	5,416	5,447

*Rates for live births, deaths, natural increase, marriages and dissolutions are computed on the number per 1,000 estimated population. The infant death rate is based on the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Rates are adjusted to account for varying lengths of monthly reporting periods.

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